



Global Digital Compact

Global Digital Compact: Background Note

(version 17 January 2023)

Digital technologies offer tremendous opportunities, including the potential to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, however, they also can pose harms to societies and the environment. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, has [said](#) that “Looking to the future, two seismic shifts will shape the 21st century: the climate crisis, and digital transformation.”


Just as how international cooperation is critical to protecting the health of the planet we all share, international efforts are needed to pursue benefits of digital technologies while mitigating their risks.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, over 1 million voices from around the world, from governments, civil society organizations, businesses, academics, technical experts, and individuals, including youth, shared their views on priorities that the United Nations and international community should consider in looking to the future.

Following these consultations, United Nations Member States adopted a Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations ([A/RES/75/1](#)) which contains this pledge:

“We will improve digital cooperation. Digital technologies have profoundly transformed society. They offer unprecedented opportunities and new challenges. When improperly or maliciously used, they can fuel divisions within and between countries, increase insecurity, undermine human rights, and exacerbate inequality. Shaping a shared vision on digital cooperation and a digital future that show the full potential for beneficial technology usage, and addressing digital trust and security, must continue to be a priority as our world is now more than ever relying on digital tools for connectivity and social-economic prosperity. Digital technologies have a potential to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda. We must ensure safe and affordable digital access for all. The United Nations can provide a platform for all stakeholders to participate in such deliberations.”

In response to the Declaration, the Secretary-General Guterres’ report, [Our Common Agenda](#), proposes a Summit of the Future, with a technology track leading to a Global Digital Compact:





“Furthermore, building on the recommendations of the road map for digital cooperation (see A/74/821), the United Nations, Governments, the private sector and civil society could come together as **a multi-stakeholder digital technology track** in preparation for a Summit of the Future to agree on a **Global Digital Compact**. This would outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all.

“Complex digital issues that could be addressed may include: reaffirming the fundamental commitment to connecting the unconnected; avoiding fragmentation of the Internet; providing people with options as to how their data is used; application of human rights online; and promoting a trustworthy Internet by introducing accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content.

“More broadly, the Compact could also promote regulation of artificial intelligence to ensure that this is aligned with shared global values.”

On 27 October 2022, the President of the UN General Assembly appointed Rwanda and Sweden as Co-facilitators to lead the intergovernmental process on the Global Digital Compact. The Co-facilitators shared the road map for the process on 16 January 2023 (see letter [here](#)).

As part of the consultative process, the United Nations is interested in hearing from everyone everywhere – individuals, groups, associations, organizations, entities - on what they want to see in the Global Digital Compact. The consultation you are organizing or input you will provide is an opportunity to contribute to shaping the Global Digital Compact and share your views with the international community.

As you prepare the consultation or begin to draft your input, consider the future of digital technologies and the continuing digital transformation. How can we best ensure an “open, free and secure digital future for all”? What shared principles should be included in the Global Digital Compact? Which issues should be addressed – those mentioned above in the Common Agenda report or others? What can and should the international community do to address them?

On the [online platform](#) set up by the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology at the United Nations, you can submit input from your consultation and/or your own views, and view the contributions others have provided. There you can also find relevant resources, such as the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and Our Common Agenda, and updates as more details are available.

The United Nations will compile and present your views to inform deliberations of the Global Digital Compact, which will take place in 2024 as part of the Summit of the Future.

Thank you for your efforts and contribution to global discussions on our shared digital future!

